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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7797

INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 0020

RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 0005

RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 0032

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000137

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA, AF/E AND AF/RSA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2017

TAGS: PREL PTER MOPS SO MU

SUBJECT: OMANI FOREIGN MINISTER SHARES VIEWS ON SOMALIA

REF: A. STATE 15727

1B. MUSCAT 103 (NOTAL)

1C. STATE 11993

Classified By: DCM Alfred A. Fonteneau for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

11. (C) During a February 11 meeting with Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yousef bin Alawi, the Ambassador delivered the U.S. response to the Omani-Saudi proposal to convene a regional foreign ministers' meeting on Somalia (refs A and B), and also raised ref C points seeking support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Bin Alawi said that he understood why the U.S. recommended expanding the invitation list for the conference, but stressed that including more participants would make the conference "too big" and thereby lessen the chances for a productive outcome. He further noted that Saudi Arabia would "not permit" Libya to be present. Bin Alawi added, however, that follow-up conferences or activities could include participation from additional countries or institutions such as the African Union.

12. (C) Regarding AMISOM, bin Alawi questioned whether a troop contingent of 8,000 was truly warranted in Somalia -- "even 10,000 or more can't do everything." (Note: Bin Alawi did not cite or indicate the basis for these numbers. End Note.) While acknowledging the need for troops in Mogadishu to replace Ethiopian forces, he claimed that "the least number (of soldiers) to be effective" should be deployed in order to control costs and help avoid charges of excessive foreign interference. The Ambassador responded that a robust stabilization force was urgently required to restore and maintain order, and that a drawdown of troops could occur as needed after deployment. Bin Alawi emphasized that any deployment of foreign troops must go hand-in-hand with a political plan to achieve stability in Somalia. He added that Oman would support a donor conference for Somalia if sufficient progress was made on ending violence and establishing a broadly representative government.

GRAPPO